City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	Redevelopment Agency Board
By:	Ann Merideth, Community Development Director
Date Written:	March 3, 2009
Meeting Date:	March 9, 2009
Subject:	Update on City Council 2009 Goal #4: Adopt Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan

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Summary

The City Council adopted its 2009 goals on February 9, including the adoption of the Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan. To date, the project is meeting its schedule; the Community Workshop was held on February 25 and Advisory Committee meetings are being held.

However, the Advisory Committee recommends one change to the schedule and staff agrees with the recommendation. After the Council accepts the Draft Plan with a list of revisions for environmental review (currently scheduled for April 27), WRT will proceed with the preparation of the Final Draft Plan. This will occur concurrently with the initial stages of environmental review. The schedule has been revised to reflect this additional step.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Attachments

Revised Schedule
Public Comments (through March 3)
Community Workshop #3 Notes

11m

Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan

As of March 3, 2009

Task / Milestone	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Public review of Draft Plan begins	26											
Advisory Committee meeting	31											
Review by commissions and committees												
Advisory Committee meeting		21										
Community Workshop		25										
Advisory Committee meetings			2,3									
Advisory Committee meeting with WRT			17									
Council, commissions, committees, WRT meeting				13								
City Council acceptance for environmental review				27								
Preparation of Final Draft Plan												
Environmental review												
Public hearings on EIR, Final Plan												
Certification of EIR and adoption of Final Plan											23	

Public Comments

Draft Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan

January 27 – C. Abbott – Email

Somehow my house was missed when we did the survey last year, but I was interested to read that many people mentioned their desire to see the Park Theater preserved. (I understand it's now owned by a private developer.) As a long time Lafayette resident (I went to Lafayette Elementary, Stanley and Acalanes in the 60s!), I am pretty attached to the theater, and wonder if there might be a joint effort with the owner to improve the building's condition and make it available for community events. I know we have Veteran's Hall, and we're kind of tied up right now with the Library, but I still think it would be a shame to lose such a unique theater.

January 29 – C. Abbott – Email

A theater in a community, especially one that could potentially be used for group events, adds an element of culture and identity that is hard to duplicate. When I think of towns that have been able to keep their longtime theaters - Palo Alto and San Luis Obispo come to mind - there is no denying that the character of the towns is enhanced by the continuing presence of these facilities. Palo Alto screens old movies to practically full houses all through the summer. While the crowds are both young and old, this is definitely a highlight for the town's seniors. The much smaller town of Dunsmuir had boarded up its theater when last I visited, leaving kids without their Saturday matinees, and giving main street the look of a depression in progress. Of course, it's all a matter of priorities, and there are very many demands at the moment for scarce funds to be spent on many worthwhile projects. However, in this new time of change and re-dedication to service, perhaps we could come up with a plan that couples some fundraising with the use of volunteer services from local architects, contractors, and suppliers who are willing to put their pride in community to work on the Park Theater - with the consent and cooperation of the current owner. I know I would be willing to help in any way I can.

February 4 – H. Peterson – Email

I'm a Lafayette resident and I just received my Lafayette Vistas newsletter. It gets better and better. I'm confused about where exactly the "Town Green" in La Fiesta Square would be located. Would the existing art/sculpture garden/little house be removed for the town green? Which retail would be displaced? I hope it doesn't mean removing historical and quaint buildings like the Hen House or the Round Up -- those are part of Lafayette's charm.

February 4 – V. Lafile (sp?) – Voice mail

Very upset about the name "Funky Town". It is a put-down to the people who have worked hard to maintain and upgrade their businesses. This area is a very Renaissance, old-fashioned area. The City is being very rude in calling it this name.

February 5 – S. Bischel – Email

Hello, An observation: As a thirty-two year resident of Lafayette, I have observed our town change considerably. One area of our community which has not changed but has deteriorated drastically is the Longs to Round Table Pizza strip. The concrete is cracked, dingy and dangerous; the trash receptacles are filthy; store fronts are worn and dirty; the parking lot is jammed and dangerous. Basically, this section of town is an affront to all the lovely new buildings and planning for our community. Is anything going to be done?

February 5 – T. Fraysse – Email

I am a 17-year-resident of Lafayette and have seen the transition of the downtown from a sleepy, slightly blighted, 50's looking downtown to where it is today. I read Lafayette Vistas and applaud the efforts to improve and update the downtown area. Here are my thoughts:

Parking. The downtown merchants suffer from the limited parking. The residents are reluctant to go downtown at certain times because there is no parking. With more plentiful parking, foot traffic will improve. Here's my proposal: All development needs to be curbside, with plentiful parking in back. For example, the area between Diablo Foods up to and including Trader Joes is a perfect area for development, which would include razing all the structures from Diablo Foods, starting with Long's up to and including Trader Joes. New construction should be curbside, with a parking structure in the back, digging down at least one story and going up two. San Luis Obispo is a good example of a town with an amazing amount of foot traffic, and more importantly, ample parking, through the construction of parking structures sufficient to accommodate the needs of the town. If Whole Foods is going in without some kind of creative parking plan, the congestion will further deter people from going downtown. Certainly, that block between the new Library and Moraga Road could be better utilized for public purposes, including retail at ground level and perhaps some creative parking structure.

The suburban 50's look. Again, get rid of the curbside parking lots. The antiquated emphasis on the automobile really doesn't work. The businesses should be on the street; the cars parked and hidden away somewhere. Again, look at San Luis Obispo. With the businesses on the street, instead of set back 50 feet, it has more of town feel, not a shopping or strip mall feel. Maybe we'll even see a Thursday night Farmers Market akin to SLO where the community comes out to shop, grab a quick bite and socialize.

The great things about town: Postino's building is a treasure. The "Funky Town area should be expanded out to absorb the Butler-Conti property. Right now, it's almost a destination. The trees are beautiful throughout town and we need more. The new building across from old Freddie's is terrific. More parks and open space is essential. The Veteran's Hall is stunning. Petar's needs to be preserved at all costs.

The worst things about town: The awful box-of-a-bank at the corner of Mt. Diablo and Moraga Road. The bunker B of A and the other bank next door look like we're getting ready for a nuclear attack. The gas stations at prime locations (including the competing Union 76 stations!) Having the Park theatre empty is a crime (Isn't Sundance interested - it would be great for films that you can't see at the Century theatres). The northside of Mt. Diablo between the parking lot at Oak Hill Road and up to the Supercuts building needs updating. Everything from Long's to Trader Joe's - suburban strip mall with little appeal and the worst parking lot of all time.

Hope this helps. You've done a great job so far.

February 5 – M. Johnson – Phone call

He is the owner of the Roundup, and he doesn't want to be replaced by a park.

February 5 – S.W. – Written note re "Funky Town"

Thanks from all of us hard working taxpayers. I know you'll blame this on the consultants, but don't you think a better name would be respectful of the business owners and residents here working hard to pay taxes too!? Maybe you and other council members should shop here in "Funky Town" too. I know I have never seen a mayor or council member in my store in 13 years! Thanks a lot for your sensitivity here.

February 5 – K. Rudman – Email

I just want to voice my opinion. I don't understand why raising density and height limits is a good thing for Lafayette. What happened to "Sustainable Lafayette?" I think in the 10 years that I have lived here the city has become more and more urban and lost most of its rural charm. While downtown certainly looks nicer the latest building with Yankee Pier and the other stores is way too high and out of place. Where is the "small town charm?" Is this all about "enhancement of its tax base?"

In addition I think that Lafayette should follow the path of upscale communities like Woodside and Portola Valley and have limitations on the square footage of houses on lots. We now have a house we have to look at as we go up our driveway that is 5890 square feet on a 1/4 acre. In addition there is a second house on the original half acre that was split that is 4500 square feet. The trucks coming and going ruined the corner of the street and the city wants me to pay a road tax so it can be fixed. The building has been out of control.

I wanted to get involved in Sustainable Lafayette but until the city has some kind of restrictions on house sizes, I think it is totally hypocritical. Raising densities and heights limits also fall into this category.
Do we really need more empty retail stores and office space?

February 6 – J. Raskin – Email

Thanks to all who are working on this....my comments:

* Sounds great, my hope would be a downtown which reflects.....

* California/western architecture as reflected in other great downtowns; Los Gatos, Palo Alto, Danville, Sonoma, Woodside (and not a hodge-podge of styles especially dank multi-story concrete monstrosities like Concord, or over build shopping centers like Dublin)

* An upscale, yet small town feeling, such as Woodside & Portola Valley

* As much as possible - designed to be easily and inexpensively maintained

* Would be nice to have a focal point such as the Towne Hall Theater, surrounded by trees or in a park setting with an expansion of trails to attract walkers, hikers and bikers

NOTE: The Plaza is very nice...but if it could be greatly expanded with bowl seating and nearby dining and parking, the Summer concerts would attract (I think) many more non-locals

* Finally, there is A LOT of space in the East End district which I think could be much more attractively designed

February 6 – K. Worth – Voice mail

Why is the City spending money on the downtown and Mount Diablo Boulevard when my court has not been fixed in 15 years?

February 9 – J. Duckworth – Email

I believe the parking situation may soon drive business away from Lafayette. Increasingly it is becoming almost impossible to find a parking space near Safeway and Trader Joe's. When Whole Foods opens we can forget about going to Noah's and possibly Safeway in Lafayette. Orinda has Safeway and Walnut Creek has Trader Joe's. A parking structure near the Theater will help with library parking and possibly La Fiesta square, but won't solve those

other parking problems. The businesses near the anchors of Safeway and Trader Joe's will also suffer when people avoid those areas because of parking difficulties.

February 9 – T. Blair – Email

I really like the downtown plan as it looks in the new Vistas but I really hope we continue to have useful but not necessarily beautiful businesses such as dry cleaners and automotive repair shops. I would hate us to get so "cute" a la Disneyland that there is no practicality. Shopping here includes services as well as goods. That said I really like the improved pedestrian access and the District idea where different rules could apply. Thank you for this opportunity. My husband and I returned to Lafayette from Pleasant Hill, at great expense, because we really missed the town feeling as well as our beautiful rolling hills and native plants. In fact I hope landscaping will continue to be water conserving natives even though they have to be replaced every 10 years or so. Many other plants need replacing as well and use much more water.

February 9 – K. Liston – Email

Plans to improve Lafayette are always welcome but I am curious how we can afford to do beautification when the city is chronically short of funds to maintain roads and walkways. The additional housing near BART is wise but I doubt that the Town Green would be well used because of the congestion and parking issues that already exist there. There are bigger and better open spaces to take children. I rarely if ever see anyone sitting in the green area in front of the theater next to Mt Diablo.

February 10 – R. Sutliffe – Email

I recently read the Lafayette Vistas issue on the strategy for downtown Lafayette.

Are there any plans to improve the appearance of the Longs Drugstore, and the adjoining building that houses the small stores that run west to Round Table Pizza? As I'm sure you have noticed, this old center is really showing its age and its appearance has become very unattractive to the point of it being a blight on the downtown shopping area.

You may know that the City of Pleasant Hill had a similar problem a few years ago with an old shopping center on Contra Costa Blvd. They were able to get the owner of the shopping center to upgrade it with a new façade. It made a huge improvement in its appearance. I think a new façade would do the same for this old shopping center in downtown Lafayette and bring it more in line with the rest of the Lafayette shopping area.

Please let me know if there are any plans to address this issue as part of the strategy for downtown Lafayette.

February 11 – R. Sutliffe – Email

Thank you for your informative reply. I guess issues like this are never simple to solve.

Based on news articles I read at the time I was under the impression that the City of Pleasant Hill was able to use some ordinances to force the owners of that center to upgrade it. I was not aware that re-development funds were involved but that makes sense. (The center that I am referring to is the one with the Ace Hardware store...not the PH downtown area with the theater, book stores etc.)

Thanks again for your work on the entire Downtown Strategy. I will read it on the website.

February 13 – D. Lively – Email

Who cooked up this WRT deal - it reeks of earlier County's "Shaping our Future" scam we once beat?. Whoever commented re high density and crime from high density housing, is right on. Re parks - our large residence lots give each of us our own personal "parks". I don't know who slipped this 4th P into "town bogies", but "1968 incorp plan" only called for 3Ps - Public Safety, Planning and Public Works...did Council direct this change, or was it a staff-driven caper? Having grown up in a park ranger family, I'm very much a conservationist (not environmentalist), but in a rural burg like ours, parks should be like Recreation - if wanted - let "wanters" raise private funds and pay for supporting facilities (like Buckeye,et al). Parks are "wants", not "needs".

February 15 – L. Hiden – Email

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
Staff 4	thruout	background	Add "support the need for, " and efficacy of", proposed changes.
2.	1-7	st network	Show that Moraga Blvd. continues; add street names; explain location of new Bruzzone street. What land uses would exist?
3.	east end		East end N. suffers from severe drainage problems. Check.
4.	1-8	pkg facility	Show other options for pkg facility. Prime retail land such as the Campana site is not recommended for target zone city parking facility serving cultural uses- the priority pkg facil. should be closer to the retail core.
5.	2-4	maps	Label, number all streets and maps; incl. in Table of Contents.
6.	3-6	map	Label streets; offer cure for Brook/School/Moraga Rd. Describe value use of Bruzzone lot proposed st and land use. What is the new road off Happy Valley Rd near Bart?
7.	3-7	map	Label streets; mark Oak Hill and 1st St. trails for study. How would potential EBMUD path users access these?
8.	4-5	emissions	Provide text to indicate that while more than half of the city's annual emissions may be attributed to the Downtown, a large portion of our downtown emissions result from freeway-bound Moraga traffic, which is beyond Lafayette's control. For this reason, many of these carbon footprint reduction measures are unlikely to result in conditions different from today's.
9.	5-4	maps	Enlarge top two maps, they are unreadable.
10.	5-5	restaurant	Grouping restaurants into one area is likely to result in over-groups stressed parking and will inhibit the potential for desirable dual use (overlapping) am/pm parking spaces use. Not good.
11.	5-8	density/pkg	The neighborhoods west and NW of Lafayette School are overly crowded with overflow parking from employees and Bart parkers due to the fact that Lafayette has historically been underparked. It is critical that adequate parking be for any housing or commercial developed in this district.
12.	staff 5-13	east end	Indicate need to investigate feasibility due to drainage problems, N side; mention the existing bridge/EBRPD trail connector between Mor. Blvd. and Mt. Diablo Blvd. Urge mix of retail on downtown side streets.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
13.	5-17	Res. over retail	There is a great deal of evidence to suggest (underscored by the experiences of Steve Cortese, Tom Lee, and the SFPD) that residential over good retail or restaurants do not mix. There are odors, noises, etc., that give undesirable results. We ought to be very judicious about where we place these units and not be including them indiscriminately, as we seem to be showing.
14.	5-18	TOD	If our shoppers are driven out of town to shop due to lack of parking and congested roads or lack of choices resulting from reducing allowable retail from the level included in the Lafayette General Plan 2002, not only will our retail sales tax revenues be reduced but our emergency ingress/egress routes will be threatened.
15.	5-21	side st dev	Explain how ground floor residential uses off major streets north of Mt. Diablo Boulevard should not be subject to special review, in light of the fact that we need to avoid strip development and retail development helps to provide depth. Recommend reconsideration of this policy; applies to collectors and minor streets, also.
15.	6-1	text & pkg	The overarching vision of the chapter is to "provide a downtown that is safe and convenient..."Explain how our SFR residents, of which we have many, will find shopping convenient if pkg is scarce. Our neighboring communities are many where parking is convenient and free; congestion is rare. Already many of our residents shop in Rossmoor, Moraga, Orinda, or PH. We should not be designing a downtown that will lose us more.
16.	6-3	st network map	Explain expected traffic and land use of the proposed st through the Albertson Opportunity area from 1st to HV. What would be gained? Urge deleting the proposed street that would extend HV Rd south with what appears to be Bickerstaff. Such a connection would present an easy shot from HV Rd via Dewing to Brook and Lafay and Stanley schools, rather than encouraging those drivers to stay on Mt. Diablo Blvd., as opposed to cutting through residential pedestrian neighborhoods.
17.	6-4		Suggest in Goal 1 to use the word "safer" rather than "safe." No downtown is "safe". Remove wording indicating that it is possible to "potentially reverse that trend" in congestion. This is misleading and unrealistic.Again, the problems Lafayette faces that are generated by Moraga thru-traffic appear to be ignored.
18.	6-5	connector	Once again, the N-S connector from HV Rd thru HV Center to Bickerstaff encourages a great deal of traffic to keep off Mt. D. Blvd. and to drive through the neighborhoods and Brook St., the neighborhood's main route to school for its children, to get to Lafayette and Stanley schools and Moraga. Not good, and not "safe" for the many walking and biking young children.
		Dual use	Action 1.3.5, multipurpose bike and ped trails- reword to read, "consider", since dual use paths have created many bike to bike and bike to ped accidents, some of them fatal. Both Mpls and Davis had done away with dual use paths in previous years. We need to research recent experience. Action 1.3.2 The City fathers, when they had the option, rejected this connection to Moraga Rd as too ugly to implement.
19.	6-6	text	Actions 1.4.2, Policy 1.5, and para 1, column 2, we have already done in conjunction with the redesign of Moraga Rd several years ago and/or in conjunction with MORRAC. Could other recommendations be made?

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
20.		Policy 1.7	Explain how this policy might be implemented in light of the fact that once the EIR is approved, much of this development can occur by right.
21.	6-7	Action 1.7.1	See above. How would we consider these projects on a by project basis if projects can be implemented "by right"? How can the City legally deny a developer who brings in a complete application to implement this plan? This recommendation appears to be in conflict with State law. Is it? On what basis would this be allowed?
22.	6—8	Action 2.1.1	Provide measures to prevent loss of retail shoppers to near-by cities if this is implemented and increased rates imposed.
23.	6-9	Policy 2.2	Lafayette is already short of parking. Show how reduced requirements for projects closer to BART would not flood nearby streets with parking shoppers and residents, or cause them to shop in nearby cities. *Our BART station is in the middle of our prime retail core. No other city that we know of has this arrangement and we ought not short our core parking by giving reductions to developers.*
25.		Pkg strategy	A parking facility should not be located in our Moraga Road RDA, which is prime retail land, unless the front- allows retail use. First priority, however, should be our retail core.
25.	6-10		These parking spaces requirements are set too low in view of the fact that Lafayette has already been historically underparked. Please revise upward. Please see comment #23.
26.	6-11		State which parts of Mt. Diablo Blvd, Mt. View to Second St., have 11' sidewalks. There are few areas like this.
27.	6-15	staff #50	What is meant by "on the east end, to facilitate neighborhood access from the south, identify possible future ped connections betw Carol Ln and 3rd St. to Moraga Blvd and Lafay Mor Trail? e have creek crossing bridges at the Gazebo & at Chateau Lf. Could the staff comment be clarified?
28.	6-15		What is the green dotted line extending from Mor. Blvd? Show and label the two existing bridges on diagram.
29.	6-16	Pol.4.4	Suggest wording change: "Consider developing connections between properties and streets that shorten ped and bike travel." We may not wish to encourage street auto travel on all of these.
30.		Act. 4.5.3	(Staff # 55) Lengthen yellow ball between green right- turn arrow and the ped crossing light that follows. The red ball comes on too quickly after the free right turn for cars to react and peds immediately move to cross when they see the go-ahead. This is dangerous.
31	6-17	maps	(Staff #55) Denote (add word) "potential/proposed" EBMUD Aqueduct Pathway crossing....Denote Feasibility Study that must first be done. Const of path depends upon this Feas. study. Add a crossing enhancement between Carol Ln and Brown Ave.
32.	6-18	shuttle	I support the proposed new downtown shuttle loop. However, "improved transit connections both within the Downtown and betw the Downtown, outlaying neighborhoods, and neighboring jurisdictions is a key element in the Downtown Strategy" is unrealistic. Our CCCTA service is to be cut back in March. The shuttle would be used if funding can be found and if efficient.
33.	6-19	shuttle route	Increase shuttle route to accommodate hotel and Veterans Hall and eliminate the swing thru Lafay Circle. The Laf C. swing would not only take too long but Hough and Laf C. W. are too narrow to accommodate the traffic they get plus the shuttle.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
34.	6-20	staff #61	Explain Wage Works and Commuter checks.
35.	6-21	Pol. 2.1.1	With free parking and easy circulation in our neighboring cities inc rates few minutes away, the desirability of non-auto modes is less likely to be enhanced than it is likely that our shoppers will shop elsewhere, causing loss of shoppers and retail sales and abandonment of our downtown by our more affluent residents to the pedestrians who live there. We might be warned by the adage, Be careful of what you wish for.
36.	6-22	bus	The transit goal addresses use but not the provision. The CCCTA cannot, as yet, provide such services in the present and given Lafayette's terrain's impact on ridership, may be unlikely to do so in the future. Generally, the CCCTA puts its money on the routes where it will get the highest ridership.
	7-3	staff #65	"Trails" does receive mention; is "sidewalks" steetscape?
37.	7-7	parks map	It would seem a waste of City money and prime retail land to place a park at the intersection of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Laf Circle W. We don't see such a thing in WC's Core at the intersection of, say, Bonanza & Main.
38.	7-8	Golden Gate pks	Explain how Golden Gate Way would be changed. Conduct pkg studies to show how much pkg would be lost along GGW and by the Gazebo.
39.	7-9	parks	Too many parks. Remove at least the pk at Mt. D/Laf C W. It is possible that the proposed park west of Fiesta Sq would be more used than the others. One major problem of downtown housing apt unit dwellers is lack of play spaces for children. This I learned by questioning many residents in SF with children who live in them and find there is nowhere outside for their children to play. For that reason, they all stated that their goal was to move out of there as soon as they could save the money to move.
40.	7-14	HV turn lane	Was this configuration modelled? The S to W bound turn lane is needed here to accommodate the traffic backup.
41.	7-15	Oak Hill	Was this configuration modeled? The City, the Circulation Commission, Fehr and Peers, DKS and Bob Harrison, as well as the LHC, worked hard and long to devise a strategy and configuration that works here. Oak Hill needs a left turn only lane, a rt turn only lane, and a rt or straight thru lane, and as much parking as it can get; these parkers frequent BART as well as Chow and retail shops south. Swing lanes remove pkg. ideally no pkg should parallel the fast moving traffic to or from our freeway ingress/egress ramps.
42.	7-17	map/trees	The chart says it is looking east but it appears to be looking west. There are 3 large trees on the e side of Golden Gate way that were planted by early settlers and show on early Historical Soc. fotos. These trees should be preserved- they are healthy. Where is there a 9' sidewalk existing on Golden Gate Way? If 7' ww is proposed for the south side, then, according to the diagram, the map is indeed looking west.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
43.	7-22 7-24	greenways	Unless massive concrete hardscape walls are built to line our creek embankments, any biking and ped circulation along them will have to be in summer. Simpler solutions and benches are likely to washed out, along with the land lining the creeks, as many homeowners have learned the hard way, including our own family, who owned apts on creekside Hough for many years. The fotos of San Luis Obispo are very nice but they are flatland and Lafay is hilly watershed unstable Orinda Formation land. Our creeks are often raging torrents in winter. Explain how this recommendation could feasibly apply to Lafayette. What has been Ashland, Ore.,'s experience and are all aspects equal? (The creek behind the Park Theater was the site of the kids' swimming hole, complete with rope swing put up by one of the local businessmen—Mr. Medaw it seems to me...somewhere I have the photograph, given to me by Joan Merryman.)
44.	7-25	GGW greenway	State where these cross-sections would be and how Golden Gate Way would be reconfigured. There will be a need to provide for parking, whether retail or business or housing line these streets. Please show where lost parking will go.
45.	7-26	art/paths	Mention Feasibility Study per discussion of EBMUD right of way. Also see comment # 43, please. The foto of the Plaza Way bench is, I believe, although perhaps I am not recalling this correctly, "artwork" done by kids twisting the bars of the bench that had been installed. Seems to me it was not like that. Ask Niroop.
46.	7-30	retail dist.	Para 2, please change "occasional" to "frequent". Lafayette wants to see their "magnificent" hills not occasionally, but frequently, and also from Mt. Diablo Blvd. On either side. Please include allowances for retaining some of our 1 story buildings.
		West end	There is intent here to insist upon rear or side parking and not pkg o allow pkg fronting on Mt. D. Blvd. This first para could be reworded to say, diagonal or on-street pkg in front will be the exception. If you don't delete "not fronting on Mt. D Blvd., Diamond K Supply, one of our oldest city businesses, and a lucrative source of retail sales tax, as well as a supply source not found closeby (think carbon footprint, driving out to Home Depot!) will eventually be driven out. They cannot exist as proposed. Many of our residents depend upon Diamond K.
46.	7-31	East end	It is important to show flexibility here. It may not always be pkg. feasible for the auto-oriented uses to provide rear of side pkg. concept. It is suggested that the last sentence be reworded to say that surface parking on Mt. Diablo Blvd. will be "discouraged".
47.		Albertson block	What is the dotted line in green above the Albertson concept? Please label. Please clearly show and label the proposed new concept street running from 1st to HV through the Bruzzone center. It is misleading not to show it clearly on this concept.
48.	7-32	stepback diag. Private prop strategies	There is too little stepback in these diagrams and in these proposed regs. The stepbacks should be increas'd so that visitors to the downtown can view their heritage hills. A 5' stepback is not only a major giveaway to a developer but will give the appearance of a street of walls. 5' stepbacks are barely noticeable.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
		general pkg	Please provide here or elsewhere in the document in the pertinent places (retail and housing, land use, character, etc.) comparative figures for retail and housing numbers as contained in the Lafayette General Plan 2002 compared to those proposed for the Draft Downtown Specific Plan 2009. Lafayette residents have a right and an obligation to be informed of these numbers, to consider them, and to examine the tradeoffs.
		Para. 2	Retail in our community and our loss of retail dollars to other communities has been intensively studied by several expert firms in the past. The consensus was not that Lafayette was too close to WC to attract good retail, since the dollars and numbers are here and within acceptable 15 mi range that retailers look at when considering placement of their business. According to Bob Kahn, an internationally respected retailing consultant and Lafayette resident (now deceased), there are many retailers who prefer to be near but not in, a WC. Our problem, we were told by experienced consultants over the years was that there were insufficient choices here and retail depends upon parcels and the synergy created by retail close to each other. This is what composing and anchors are all about. We were told to set up a commission to court retail to come here. It was just such courting--from Bob Kahn—that persuaded Trader Joe's to locate here. We do not need less retail than our General Plan calls for. To attract good retail, we need more good retail – and parking! - We need to put in the time and effort to persuade retailers to come here. If we fail to provide space set aside for retail we will continue to have to ask our residents over and over to pass ballot measure in the name of providing city services to our public. Many years ago we had such a commission. Let's do that – and locate the parking!
49.	7-36, 37	pkg	Show where parking will be accommodated for this housing. High densities should not be on the south side; our residents want to see the hills and the S side is lower. State where parking will be in all of these locations. It is not wise to short parking to these developments. Residents report having to walk many blocks when they are tired at nite, just between parking they have found and their apts. It is unwise and unfair to short the parking to benefit developers and/or a concept of "smart growth/sustainability" when our side streets are already jammed with parking. Each developer should be required to provide an adequate amt.
50.	7-38, 39	use pkg	Add film as a use to the theater area and indicate where the parking will be for this and the uses mentioned on p. 39.
51.	8-1	infrastructure	This 8.1 Introduction reads, "This Chapter describes the community and infrastructure facilities and services that are provided to serve the Downtown. Implications of development for community services such as police service, fire/emergency medical response, parks and recreation facilities, schools, and solid waste disposal are discussed. Infrastructure systems addressed include……." There appears to be no discussion in this chapter of the implications of the Strategy-proposed development. Please include this critical discussion.
52.	9-2	CIP	Are land acquisition costs not included in this cost estimate? Please clarify and increase the size of the sm print at bottom.
53.	9-3	GGW	Please state in what way Golden Gate Way would be reconfigured. Do the roughly $4m include this reconfig'n? Show reconfiguration in all Streetscapes diagrams.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
54.	9-4	pkg	Where are these parking structures? Is the theater area pkg rights acquisition for 77 spaces, the Chuck Stuart property? This would appear to be insufficient. Is the Campana Music property targeted? What size structure would this be? Whom would it be expected to serve? Core retail pkg should be Lafayette's No. 1 priority. Neither of these serve that function. Top line, sm print, the word "available" has been omitted.
55.	9-5	subset & table	The lefthand para speaks to a subset of priority improvement projects that are identified and can be completed in the near-to medium term with available funds. The wording states "These priority projects would cost approx $21.5m as shown in the following table: The source of funds to implement these priority projects is summarized in Section 9.5 Financing." Please provide the table that shows the subset of these projects. There is no table on this page. Nor is there a Section 9.5, Financing. Please provide both table and Section 9.5 Financing
56.	9-11	diagram	Please show new road betw First and HV Rd.
57.	9-13	diagram	Please color code a key for understanding these diagrams. Show parking and explain where the parking garage mentioned in the last para would be. Is eminent domain action envisioned?
58.	9-16	pkg	Lafayette residents will not want these changes if they mean at the expense of the neighborhoods proximate to the downtown where excess parking from downtown employees and BART pkg as well as multi-family and commercial uses that are underparked already park up the neighborhood side streets.
59.	9-17	pkg	Indicate studies applicable to Lafayette that show that new development in the downtown can have reduced parking requirements nts and if that is true why is WC adding parking everywhere it can. Our first priority should be our retail core parking. Explain what is meant by "a successful downtown should include Redevelopment Agency action as needed to facilitate land assembly as necessary for desired development projects to proceed, based on available funds." Again, is eminent domain action, allowed under RDA law, envisioned to have a place in this plan?

February 16 – L. Hiden – Email

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
1.	1-9	raise in density	A raise in density cap from 35 du/ac to 45 du/ac in cap the Downtown core may contribute to an unbearable congestion in our very constrained roads sys. Suggest trying this out in a very small portion of the Downtown Core and expanding it slowly if auto ownership and trips work out as predicted.
2.	1-10	stepbacks & ht	These street frontage heights appear to be excessively high. There are also concerns that Mt. D. Blvd., without considerably increased stepbacks, will look like a wall of buildings and prevent shoppers from enjoying the beauty of our hills. I believe that Lafayette residents care more about viewing their own majestic hills and ridgelines as they go about town than they do about protecting views of the hills from the BART station.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
3.	2-4&5	1x EIR approval`	Please label and number all streets. Text states that for projects "if, when considering subsequent development proposals, the City determines that the proposed development will not result in new impacts or require additional mitigation, the City can approve a project without additional environmental review." Please state what other types of review would then be allowed a city.
4.	2-5&6	chpts of Plan	A city must be environmentally sustainable but must also be fiscally sustainable. Please provide a section addressing how this Plan will enhance and ensure Lafayette's fiscal sustainability—usually the role of a city's retail areas. A city's infrastructure must also be sustainable. Please include a section explaining how adding dwelling units in the numbers shown herein will not so overly stress our constrained roadways as to create blockage of on our emergency ingress/egress routes.
5.	3-1	vision	Elsewhere in the document, it is stated that Lafay residents want a "semi-rural" city. This has been so for a very long while. Please include "semi-rural" in Vision text, even though the CAC may not be able to define the term. "Semi-rural" may be one of those aspects that one knows and many Lafayette residents still "see" it.
		Small, local	Do we really mean that we want to "encourage economic activity that benefits the community by encouraging small local business"? We had for many years a very large and lucrative local bus that was not small, a nursery wholesaler. What do we mean by "small, local"? Local ownership? Small in building size? Small in earnings? No chains? (Chains, we may some day want to restrict in location as WC has done.)
		Sustainability - Vision	Lafayette loses much retail sales tax to other communities. Retail has been cut significantly in this Plan as compared to the Laf Gen Plan 2002. I disagree with the statement in text that reads "economic sustainability is promoted by encouraging revenue producing commercial activity and housing/jobs balance." According to traffic engineering firms doing work for the Contra Costa Council not long ago, not only has Lafayette had a nearly perfect jobs-housing balance for many years but a jobs-housing balance effort simply does not work and cannot be forced. In addition, jobs/ housing balance has little to do with economic success and more to do with the income of a city's residents and residents within a 15 mi radius, and the amount of desirable retail within that city's boundaries. Suggest deleting the reference to jobs/housing balance, it doesn't fit into this statement. Further, with retail bringing to the city's General Fund 1c on the dollar, adding retail quantity is more lucrative than adding more people, generally speaking.
6.	3-5	land use	It is hoped that retail will be included with several of these "districts."
7.	3-4	new street	Please describe what uses this new street betw 1st and Happy Valley Rd. will serve. Please show more sts and number all diagrams.
8.	3-8	creeks	Due to the fact that our creeks can become raging torrents and our Orinda Formation soils are unstable, is it wise to create the proposed installations? Does the Ashland ex. fit Lafayette? San Luis Obispo is flat land, as opposed to Lafay watershed; quite a few families have lost valuable land (incl ours) or homes from washouts.
9.	3-9	maps	It doesn't seem a wise use of funds to turn Laf. Circle W at Mt. D., into a park-is prime retail sp. What is a connector? A "streetscape character"?
10.	3-11	bldg hts	Bottom foto: this scene, showing "a variety of bldg heights (Eureka, CA)" appears as a monotonous flat wall of buildings varying little in height, all w/unappealing flat

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
			rooftops. This is not an inviting buildings image that would inspire interest from many Lafayette residents or area shoppers, nor would the impoverished landscaping shown.
11.	4-1	sustainability	Suggest deleting 2nd half of 4th sentence (the italics) There is general scientific consensus that such phenomena are part of a long-term trend, known as climate change *and that human-induced increases in atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs are the predominant cause." Scientific American* and other periodicals appear to indicate consensus on the warming but not the predominant cause.
12.	5-3	existing destin'ns	Many key businesses and activity sites are shown. Please indicate the location of Diamond K Supply, a business unique in Lamorinda.
13.	5-4	maps	Enlarge upper maps. They are unreadable.
14.	5-5	district pkg	The "park once" concept is unworkable for lg amts of shopping such as for groceries. Clustering restaurants as proposed will overly crowd and stress parking in such a sm town as Lafay and will inhibit am/pm dual use of valuable parking spaces.
15.	5-6	West End	Please preserve Diamond K supply if this district is to be primarily office and residential. It is unique in LMO. Lafay residents do not want and should not be req'd to spend the gas, time, and pollution, to head for Home Depot for the types of materials Diamond K supplies. Diamond K goes a long way to easing our carbon "footprint" -if we are genuinely concerned about such things. In addition, it would help Lafay to court a car dealership back to town—we should be careful not to overly-gentrify. Lafay has historically been self-sustaining. Due to our constrained infrastruction we need to continue these land use practices.
16.	5-13	East End	Investigate feasibility of east end medians in light of past severe drainage problems on N side properties.
17.	5-15		GatewayWalMart has built, experimentally, below-ground "environmentally correct" stores when requested and in rare instances, breaking their "mold". Would such a complex work on the former Hungry Hunter property, incl underground pkg? It would solve retail sales tax problems, our library O and M, our streets repair problems, and the interchange is next door. Atop the spot could be a grassy park. Is such a concept worth investigating?
18.	5-17	mixed use	Concentrated mixed use in the downtown as opposed to diffusing the housing throughout the city may help reduce the growth of traffic on Moraga Rd but frwy-bound traffic is beyond Lafayette's control—unless we were to consider metering lights. With the diffused housing concept offered in the Lafay Gen Plan 2002 the auto trips could be reasonably expected to enter and exit hwy 24 at the center, east and west ends. With the proposed plan, traffic destined for hwy 24 will now concentrate itself, along with Moraga traffic, within the center of town, causing, in my view, one huge mess.
		Hous/retail Restaurant	Steve Cortese, the SF PD, and Tom Lee will substantiate that housing over retail or restaurant uses doesn't work well, due to odors, noises, etc. and their impacts on each other. There has been experience to verify this.
		Reduced retail	Please include comparative numbers to indicate how sq' were devoted each to housing units and to retail both in the Laf Gen Plan 2002 and in the Draft DownTown Specific Plan 2009. Please indicate a comparison of housing in the downtown vs housing throughout, as well. Lafayette residents have the right and the obligation to study the differences and evaluate them.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
		Reduced pkg	Rather than reducing parking requirement ratios within the Retail, Civic & Cultural districts, Lafay has been traditionally underparked. We should not lower our parking standards, since BART is within a hair's distance of our retail core and shortages in both will have serious repercussions to our retail sales tax as shoppers head out of the city to shop, and to our neighborhoods proximate to the downtown, due to overflow. Please see Circulation comments.
19.	5-20	Pol. 5.1	3rd line, suggest substituting "including" for "giving consideration to".
20.	5-21	Pol. 5.4	Para. 2, what is meant by "These portions"?
21.		Pol. 5.5	To avoid strip development and create needed depth, however delicious side streets look to developers of housing, residential uses in the downtown on our side street arterials, collectors, major and minor streets should also be subject to special approval. These should welcome retail, since our current retail contribution to our General Fund currently constitutes 25% of General Fund revenues.
22.	5-22	Op Sp Netwk	The potential park at Laf Circ. W. is sited on prime retail space. We ought to be protecting it for that use.
23.	5-23	locally owned	What is meant by "locally owned"? Are we not to *all* small business? For ex., Steve Cortese, owner of Fiesta Ctr lives in Orinda. Do we not support all business? For Ex., if it comes, Whole Foods, which Lafayette residents eagerly anticipate,is far from a small business. Would we not support it, too? Diablo Foods has been termed the heart of our city. No one would want to see it end yet I find no effort in the Plan to support continuance of this singular, true, locally owned business. The same is true of Diamond K Supply. Please alter plan to accommodate these true Lafayette small businesses!
24.	7-8	pkg	Before parks are implemented in these locations, the pkg needs of these areas should be evaluated and rectified.
25.	7-9	parks	See above. SF residents with children who live in apts not near playgrounds are eager to move out. However, I believe that retail rather than a park should be located along our main street's Core Area.
26.	7-32	stepbacks	5' is far too little, and barely noticeable, required step- back for these buildings. I'd urge doubling or tripling stepbacks to allow Lafay residents views of our hills and to avoid a "high wall" look.
		Shoppers	Since it is retail that attracts retail and studies have shown that Lafay has the 15 mi radius of income and population but lacks choices, I would suggest again setting up a retail development task force to persuade retailers to come here (as Bob Kahn did with Trader Joe's). There is a synergy needed by retail and Lafayette has been shown to need more choices to avoid losing valuable retail sales tax to nearby cities. Not all good retailers want to be in a WC. Many would like to be near, rather than in, a WC.
27.	7-33	limit frontages	Please include wording limiting high frontage length per block so as to avoid a monotonous, walled-in appearance. Could we also provide for some 1-story buildings?
28.	7-34.	show hills fotos	Please show perspective in foto form of what drivers on Mt. Diablo Blvd would see of the hills on either side and the location of the images. These views are more significant to Lafay residents than how the hills look to residents standing on the BART platform.
		Mercantile hgt	Please state that the Mercantile Bldg is 42 ½' from mid-roof-line, for reference.

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
29.	7-35	BART Block	Please ensure variation in angles, heights, roof lines, and downtown pkg more parking than is cited in this Plan. This are appears in the diagram as a highly congested area. How many units would be factored into this prototype? Increase parking to accommodate 2 cars per unit in most down units. Singles often have live-ins and often both need cars. Three years ago, Joan Merryman, for whom the new Book Room is named, visited her son and daughter-inlaw in Portland-- posterchild for sustainable growth. She wanted in the worst way to visit the sm neighborhood library and her kids set out to take her, since she could walk only a block. They drove around and around look- for a parking space, for over half an hour; after combating traffic backup along the way for most of the rest of the tour. Joan never saw the library. With no place to park and unbelievable traffic congestion, it was not possible. We need to be very careful what we put into this plan. As the then-mayor of Portland reported on SF's public radio, what we do cannot be reversed after developers have bought properties in expectation of the high densities in a plan, if you discover that what you have done doesn't work. (Seems to me that one city fired its sustainability staff head due to transp problems created for the city by that person's work there.)
30.	7-37	heights	These heights, proposed to exceed the 35', would seem too high for the south side, in particular, and likely to be very much underparked.
31.	8-2	density	Transit village housing, mixed use, & high density du & services are reported to be extraordinarily difficult to police and services protect. If this is implemented, a center's provision of its own funded policing should be required. However, even at best, the policing of such as these is difficult.
32.	8.I3	fire	How many floors can our fire equip scale? - not all of Lafayette's fire stations are staffed full-time. We are informed that they are empty some days a week for a significant number of hours. Lafay essentially subsidizes Con Fire.
33.	9-8	semi-rural	Text states "...and the desire of residents to maintain a semi-rural character with low density development." This plan is not "low density" and more than likely would not be termed "semi-rural". If the consultant was aware of this desire of residents, why then did the consultant not respect this desire in the plan? Please explain.
34.	9-9	office condos	Para. 1 – Addition of 75,000 more sq' of new office sp in the future, including ownership units up to 10,000 sq' is not worth sacrificing our potential retail choices and the semi-rural feel of the city.
		Retail	Para. 4- State here amt of retail provided for in the Laf Gen Plan 2002 as compared to what is supplied here and how flexibility can be improved to accommodate retail above 100,000 sq' should it want to locate here.
35.	9-14	maps	Provide color key for this and p. 9-15.
36.	9-15	text	Suggest also including para.3 in Plan's Introduction.
37.	9-16	pkg	Para. 5- modifying parking requirements will clog our neighborhood streets and cause outlying residents to abandon our downtown to those apt dwellers who live there, to shop in nearby communities with better circulation and free parking, and will result in lost retail sales tax revenues. Please do not do this.
38.	9-17	pkg	See above. I disagree with para. 2, Pkg. Show studies of cities like Lafayette also with a BART station one block away from their core shopping areas. I would urge that this reduction not take place. Also suggest implementing the recommendations in para. 3. Last para, is eminent domain action anticipated?

L. Hiden's Comments			
#	Page #	Subject	Comment
39.	9.22	core pkg	Please, first priority to a Core Area parking facility.
40.	9-23	increment	Please explain "increment of increased property taxes" and that retail sale tax subventions will always be with Lafayette but when the RDA is finished, termed out, Lafayette will no longer be able to retain the increment of improved property taxes and they will revert once again to the County. This is one very good reason why the City is interested in getting these improvements done quickly and one very good reason why the retaining the amt of retail as recommended in the Lafayette General Plan 2002 is so important to Lafayette as a city and to the city services provided to our residents.
41.	9-24	in lieu fees	Earlier in the document the cost of a single parking space newly constructed was somewhere in the neighborhood of $80,000. Please explain what amt might be charged of developers as in pkg lieu fees and how long might it be before a meaningful parking facility could be constructed that would make it worthwhile giving parking reductions to developers?

Many thanks to the DSP Citizens Advisory Committee and staff for their hundreds of hours of review, thought, and participation efforts on behalf of our residents and our downtown's future. No doubt, they have learned far more about Lafayette's downtown than, before embarking on this task, they ever wanted to know.

February 17 (received) – S. Pedder – Letter

We are the owners of two parcels of property on Golden Gate Way, the first parcel is 3445 Golden Gate Way which has been the home of our law office for about 50 years. Also, we own the property next door at 3451 Golden Gate Way, which has now been occupied by a school that teaches Spanish to young children for around 3 years.

I have reviewed the above-referenced plan as it refers to our properties here on Golden Gate Way. Per the plan, we are in the "downtown civic and cultural district". This I have no problem with at all. I am concerned somewhat however with the language in connection with this district at page 5-11 which indicates "the future land use focus for this corridor would include mixed use retail and housing, as well as new civic, community and cultural uses."

The question is, where does this leave us in connection with our law office use at 3445 Golden Gate Way and the different uses that would be available for the small school rental on our property next door at 3451 Golden Gate Way. Query, would the existing uses be "grandfathered" in or what would be the city's position vis-a-vis these issues.

I would like to get a firm position in writing on these points. Frankly, I believe that "office use" language should be encompassed in the above-referenced description to eliminate future problems.

February 18 – C. Sevilla – Email

I am forwarding my non-circulation related comments on the Downtown Specific Plan:

Page 7-27: Remove "Lafayette Plaza Park is a possible location for permanent sculptures as well as for temporary art exhibits." Placing public art in that location will be throwing good money after bad. Public art belongs where people walk and congregate.
Page 7-10, policy 2.1: modify (i.e., meet ADA requirements at a minimum) to (i.e., meet ADA requirements at a minimum, and ensure that street furniture does not impede those with impaired vision)

Page 7-21, 1st line: "The Illustration below" should read "The illustration on the previous page"
Page 5-15: Change all references to "global warming" on this page to "climate change"
Page 9-2, 2nd line up from the bottom: "more than $65 million" should read "less than $64 million"
Page 6-4, right column, 5th line from the bottom: "comlementary" change to "complementary"
Page 6-9, line 5: "Ssite" to "Site"

February 18 – S. Ware – Email

Do you think this area can be renamed something other than "Funkytown?" How about Brown Ave Area?
It is demeaning the residents and all of the hard working owners and employees. Could we call the town hall area "Liars, Cheats, and Thieves?"

February 18 – L. Hiden – Email

Why is it so difficult to analyze the *Draft Downtown Specific Plan*?

Last evening, the Circulation Commission took an hour to figure out how they were going to go over the *Draft DSP.* All commissioners and all four BPAC members present had gone through the *Plan.*

We began at seven. Some of us offered comments as to how to simiplify the process and three of us had written out comments (Cindy Sevilla, I, and Leah Greenblat, Staff.) We decided to begin with Leah's 84 comments and those commissioners and BPACers who had amendments could add those so that the comments could get to the Planning Commission by its Thursday, February 19, hearing. After that, each commissioner was to comment on his or her more serious concerns or preferences. We had intended that this commission list would go to the Planning Commission along with Leah's matrix, as amended. It was not to be.

Around 8 p.m., we began our comments on Leah's staff report. Around 9 p.m., we went around the table and each commissioner or BPACer had five minutes to give his or her own comments on the *Plan.* Each did so and we finished that part at 10:30 p.m. Assured by staff that there was no need to hurry with our comments, that there was plenty of time before they would be needed, we agreed to carry on at our first meeting in March, if possible, together with another item. We would then finish our commission's analysis at the 2nd meeting in March.

I have an idea as to why it is so difficult to process this *Plan.* I have participated in and written parts of quite a few large, excellent, and detailed documents, including the ballot booklet for *Contra Costa County Growth Management Program* (Measure C) and C's *Implementation Documents,* the *Congestion Management Plan*, the *1990 Barton Aschman Lamorinda Traffic Plan*, and the *Lafayette General Plan 2002.* All of these plans were not put out to the public as a *Draft* ***FINAL*** *Plan* as this one has been until there were many draft iterations. This *Draft Plan* has still too many problems within it because the commissions and committees have not been given enough time to analyze its contents, as evidenced by what happened at the Circulation Commission meeting last evening. This *D DSP* with which we have been presented is still very much an early working draft. This is like putting a car out on a test market before all of the bugs have been worked out.

February 20 – L. Hiden – Email

In listening to the Planning Commission's discussion last evening about the DSP, it occurred to me that when I sent my comment pages on traffic and on land use (everything else) per the DSP, I'd forgotten to comment on the impacts of the Park Once and Walk theory around which the D DSP is built.

In short, I believe that, first of all, that the Park Once and Walk is unlikely to work for Lafayette and that those who live in the downtown will already be there and will be able to do that walking. I am concerned that, regardless of the need in all communities for good exercise (I work out twice a week) that Park Once and Walk precludes use of the

downtown from all but the able-bodied. Such a system leaves out *many* of our residents and visitors. For example, it makes it nearly impossible for the following to use the downtown:

- young moms and dads with small children and no one to leave the kids with
- people with only one day to shop during the week and with large amts of shopping to do
- the elderly, who may not be as fit as the enthusiastic, young walk-abouts
- the infirmed
- people with fused ankles
- people with bad hips or knees, some of whom have bad joints not because they were lazy throughout their lives but because they were athletes throughout their lives
- those with asthma and other pulmonary problems (past pneumonias, very common, etc.)
- the physically handicapped
- those with heart, circulation, and/ or blood pressure problems, etc.
- those who take pain or other necessary prescriptions that make them tired
- those who are recovering from surgery

I'm sure that the committee would be able to come up with more.

In addition, I am not fond of the roads through the Bruzzone property, both the N bound and the E and W-bound. In the words of one of our LHC Board members when we discussed the DSP, "If Moraga Road is continued up through the Bruzzone property it will force pedestrians into islands of stores surrounded by islands of traffic."

Please, would you let the Planning Commission know that what the Planning Commission received as the Circulation Commission notes for last evening were mostly done by staff and the comments from the Circulation Commission itself will be coming to the PC hopefully by its March 5th meeting (since the PC could very well be wrapping up at that mtg, anything else could be too late). Leah Greenblat was going to let the PCers know that.

February 20 – L. Hiden – Email

One added thought for the committee, please, if you would give this to them, if I may--keeping in mind the list of persons who would be negatively impacted by the Park Once and Walk system ---if you consider the lives of these people I've listed below, such a system forces many of these people to become less dependent and more depend upon others, as well. Would you please pass that thought onto the DSP CAC, also, in conjunction with the comments below? And if anyone says, they can use the handicapped parking.....remind them that there are not nearly enough of those for those purposes.

February 23 – V. Meredith – Email

A few comments:.1) Residents over retail seem like a good thing and keep downtowns alive at night. S.F. and many other cities as you know, are full of it, and seem to in fact have revived it, and it seems to work well particularly if the stores close in the early evening. I could see not having something over a restaurant, though. 2) No kidding, more parking but not on street on Mt. Diablo. I still wonder how cars back up on to Mt. Diablo when it is busy at the new Yankee Pier; etc. development. Is it working though? Have the new stoplights solved the issue? 3).Hard to imagine too many parks, but hopefully whatever parks are planned will be considerably better designed for pubic usage than the one in front of the theater. I rarely see anyone actually sitting in that place. It is incredibly uninviting and seemed to be designed purely to be looked at not used. It needs some serious rethinking and reintegrating with surrounding retail .4) The gas stations in key locations on Golden Gateway, Oak Hill, 1st, should be encouraged to move but then there will be serious/expensive environmental hazards with which to deal. 5) I agree the mixing of peds and bikes is not the greatest. I often have the wits scared out of me when walking on the Laf/Moraga Trail by a biker whizzing by. Also, as we age, I find some of my friends do not hear the warnings shouted by bikers moving at very fast speeds. It is amazing that there are not more accidents. Would setting a bike speed limit help?.

6) Absolutely, we must protect the view of the hills from downtown, many of which have already been lost. The hills should be like an ever present diorama or back drop for downtown. It so uplifts my spirits and my joy in Lafayette when I can see those beautiful hills peeking over the one- two story downtown buildings. I imagine many Lafayetters feel the same. Hopefully we will protect and treasure these views above all things for all time.

February 23 – S. Bea – Email

Some notes on what I quickly read in plan. My apologies if you've already had similar comments, but at least you'll see one more person thinks it.
1. Beware of child-use play parks near busy streets, unless there will be locks, bolts, and double fences. Those tricky critters have ways of sneaking out onto busy streets; more space b/w park and streets so parents can chase down kids, the better.

2. Lafayette Elementary school will desperately need parking if old library goes to new use. Kindergarten parents, including myself, use the old library lot when library is closed to bring our kids to and from school.

3. Will Funky Town have enough draw power, competing w/all the other new downtown improvements?

4. Be wary of expanded height limits: try to preserve views of beautiful hills that make our area so beautiful.

5. Reinstating bus system great idea: how will it work for kids who live only a mile or so from school? We live up Hawthorn Drive.

6. Any chance of giving the Moraga Blvd. park facelift: add playstructure for kids? I sometimes see older kids "hanging out" will nothing to do.

7. Community Activity Center for teens? They could play ping-pong, chess, volleyball, gymnastics, have dances, etc. that are non-school or non-planned. What non-school/non-program activity centers are there for Lafayette?

February 23 – V. Bonner – Email

1) My number one priority would be to establish a downtown park. Orinda, Moraga and Walnut Creek all have nice centrally located parks. What happened to us? I notice the kids hanging out at Safeway, in the Flippers parking lot or at the Lafayette Elementary School.

2) Since I walk to BART every day, it would be nice to have a more pedestrian friendly downtown. The trellis at the corner of Mt. Diablo and Moraga Rd. (SE corner) is attractive, but it causes a blind spot for northbound drivers on Moraga Rd. turning right onto Mt. Diablo. As a pedestrian, I have had many near-misses at this location and I predict that someone will get hit there some day.

Thanks for your hard work for the City of Lafayette and I look forward to hearing more about the Downtown Strategy. BYT, I love living here.

February 24 – M. Foster – Email

I just realized that the Lafayette Downtown Strategy meeting is tomorrow night; unfortunately I will be out of town, but I was interested to see if any of those plans include the Park Theater.

I have recently been thinking about an idea to renovate the theater as a restaurant/bar which would also feature classic and/or contemporary cinema. I think it would be very popular with the residents, and could provide a great focal point for the new downtown area, if we featured upscale food and wine from local Lafayette businesses.

I have been trying to get information about the current owners of the theater, so that I might contact them about potentially purchasing or leasing the property; however, I have not had any luck. If you have any information, I would be very interested to hear it...also if you have any ideas how this might fit in with the strategy to energize the downtown renovation, I would love to discuss further.

I have lived in and around Lafayette for many years, and would very much like to be involved in any way possible.

February 24 – Lafayette Homeowners Council – Letter

See Attachment 1.

February 24 – C. Stuart – Fax

See Attachment 2.

February 25 – L. Westphal – Email

I came across an interesting outline on pedestrian friendly communities. I was trying to research some information on crime and it's relation to walkable towns and found this from SEQL Sustainable Environment for Quality of Life (out of South and North Carolina). It has some great talking points which I will try to say tonight if given a chance to speak. One is the connection between crime and pedestrian friendly streets (lower), and that "many of the neighborhoods that tend to hold or increase their property values are strong on streetscaping and walkability."

Anyway, many of you have probably already seen this or one similar, but I hadn't and it fit so nicely with what we are trying to do, that I thought I would pass it on anyway. Please click on the link if you have a minute and just print it out for future reference. It has some other links to it like traffic calming strategies, implementation techniques and funding resources (probably written pre-economic woes though), for creating walkable communities. Anyway, it is good information to have on hand.

http://www.epa.gov/region4/airqualitytoolkit/9_CaseStudies/SEQL%20-%20Pedestrian%20Friendly%20Streetscapes.pdf

February 25 – L. Bolla-Dow – Email

As you know, I have been a citizen of Lafayette for nearly 30 years and the primary reason I have not moved is due to the quaint nature of our downtown area along with the breathtaking views of our hillsides. It troubles me the powers that be are giving zero consideration to what these ridiculous building heights will do to harm Lafayette's reputation of having that wonderful small town feeling. Additionally, I am particularly concerned about the added traffic issues on Mt. Diablo Blvd. which are already unbearable. Added growth and expansion will cause already major traffic issues to worsen after the completion of these proposals. More traffic will drive local folks and guests of our City to do their shopping elsewhere, adversely effecting our local businesses. Having formerly served on the Walnut Creek's Contra Costa Centre's Board of Directors for over 15 years, I'm terribly disappointed that traffic studies seem to have been overlooked in the planning of our lovely downtown area. Had they been done properly, no one in their right mind would remotely consider the currently proposed projects. Certainly, these people are not residents of Lafayette who shop downtown. Thus, I strongly oppose the further development of our downtown area and feel it extremely important to put an end to the concept of these proposed projects. Enough is enough.

February 25 – T. Fraysse – Email

Thanks for the notice. I can't make it tonight. My thing is parking, parking, parking.

February 25 – G. Froymovich – Email

I hope that the DSP workshop went well. I was not able to attend, but did make the one hosted by the Chamber. I think that the panel did a great job and certainly eased many of my worries to some degree. At that time, I asked a question relating to the gridlock that could be caused by the increase in the density cap. City Manager Falk and Councilmember Anderson both stated that this was an unresolved issue.

My worry is that by raising the density cap via a long-term planning document with mandatory authority, we could do irreversible damage to Lafayette's quality of life and sales tax by exacerbating already difficult traffic problems. Perhaps some of the newly proposed traffic routes may alleviate this, but they are not certain, nor could their efficacy be guaranteed if they were certain.

Perhaps thought should be given to a way to make sure this is not irreversible. The easiest way would be to drastically lower the density caps and put in place a process of regular review to gradually increase them if the Council deems such action to be prudent. Perhaps they could be pegged to quantifiable traffic conditions. Just some food for thought. If the caps are taken advantage of to the maximum, we could easily see a one-third increase in vehicle on the road in that downtown (and the infrastructure strain for those vehicles and increased garbage runs to serve their owners).

One last concern I have, as someone that lived with two vehicles but one parking spot at the bottom of the shield (Whitten Manor), is that all those new residents would have to park their cars somewhere. The revenue implications for the city would likely be positive due to ticketing, but it is a consideration to keep in mind.

Thank you all for your time and dedication.

February 26 – M. Branagh – Email

I want to commend you all, for way you are going about developing the new general plan. I think these workshops are high efficient and effective. It's a great way to educate the public and get them involved. I think the height increase is essential for ground floor commercial and for proper upper floor ceiling heights. The proposed parks and creek paths are wonderful amenities which will lead to better connected downtown. Continuing the aggregate parking which is currently behind Baja Fresh is the best idea of a group in my opinion. The Woodbury had to have a marketing report completed this past fall and I want to share this quote from Susan State (Very respected housing consultant in Northern California).

I am noticing a dramatic change in the amount of energy in downtown Lafayette from the time I first looked at this project (May 2004). So much so, that I think as a part of this assignment, I will conduct as many personal focus groups as I can. It looks to me by personal observation that there is a fundamental shift taking place. I see many more families, and young couples in the area, indicating that this is becoming a very family-friendly first-choice for Bay Area buyers. This is going to give the existing residents who want to "move-down" a greater opportunity than ever before to sell their existing homes.

My table last night was a mix of anti change and ok with simple change but all agreed the recent developments have been great for the City, La Fiesta square and Mercantile building. My only suggestion is that City uses this opportunity to identify real specific needs the City has (example senior housing, medical office off of Moraga Rd, etc)

and indentify ideal locations for those specific uses. By blanketing the whole downtown with the same general zoning (height and density) you allow a lot of freedom, which can be good but also bad. As a developer, we typically build what make the most economic sense at that time, which may not be the best use. One thought is leaving the new GP in place on these parcels but create incentives/bonuses for developers if they build what is needed. Example if in the new GP Town Center is rezoned 60 units an acre, maybe increase it to 70 and reduce the parking requirement if a seniors project it built. Kind of like the State's 20% density bonus works. Maybe this can be done later with a specific plan, I don't know.

Anyways on behalf of my father, mother, brother and sister-in-law(Peter and Mona Branagh 23 Samantha Dr, Lafayette; Mike and Jen Branagh 60 Carolyn Ct, Lafayette); we want to let you know we are in favor of the new general plan.

February 27 – B. Clack – Counter note

Requests that medical uses be allowed throughout the downtown.

February 28 – N. Flood – Email

I attended the community meeting on the proposed Downtown Plan last Wednesday evening and came away with mixed feelings. The organization of the meeting, with small groups working together and a spokes person reporting on the discussion in that group, worked very well. I felt more comfortable expressing my ideas in that small group and was pleased that our spokes person reported the general thoughts and concerns of our group. Although I was happy with the procedure, I had the feeling that our concerns were not fully heard.

A major concern that was expressed by many groups was the proposed height limit for new structures. The idea of having building after building along Mt. Diablo Blvd. at the proposed height limit seems as if it would create a wall and would be very unattractive. With the possibility of variances for particular projects, the height of buildings could grow even taller. Our views of the hills would be eliminated and those remaining older buildings would be dwarfed by these new structures.

One group talked about preserving certain key historic or architecturally interesting buildings as an important part of the community. In my opinion, this should be a high priority. These buildings, some designated as historic sites, should be identified and kept from encroachment of newer buildings at the full height limit. The proposed three story structure at the corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Golden Gate Way is one example of this possibility. The core of our community and some of our oldest buildings are in that area and these buildings should be a focal point. They should not be hidden by a large structure.

The idea of green spaces in the down town area is very appealing. The proposed Happy Valley Creek Greenway seems to be a good idea, but I realize that such a project would impact many property owners, both business and some residential. I would hope that such a project would be aimed at preservation of the creek, including adjoining oaks and other trees, and not aimed at development. One concern would be the proposed town house/retail development along the creek. Once again, tall buildings adjacent to a preserved area.

As a trustee of the Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District, I have some concerns about the proposed addition of median strips and improved sidewalks on the east end of town. It is very important that access to the cemetery, from both directions, be maintained. It is also important that the cemetery district be informed, in a timely manner, about possible changes.

Although I have expressed my major concern about new structures, I continue to be concerned about traffic and parking in the down town area. There seems to be little that will improve our traffic problems and the idea of additional housing in the area seems as if it will make things even worse.

As a life long resident of Lafayette, I have seen many changes over the years and realize that change and growth are necessary. I am pleased that so much effort has been put into this long range plan. I hope that the community will continue to be involved in planning and that their opinions will be given utmost attention.

February 28 – S. Richard – Email

You've probably seen these types of messages. It seems that it is simply creating unnecessary fear about the downtown strategic plan instead of helping residents understand it better. Anyway, I haven't really been involved much with the downtown strategic plan, but it seems very important to communicate what the strategic plan is, the goals, and the benefits to the community as clearly as possible. It's normal for people to have input and concerns about specific aspects of a plan, but overall it's much better for a community to have a coherent vision for how the city will evolve than no plan at all.

Email: Our City now proposes to drastically alter the density, appearance, and character of Lafayette and cause increases traffic congestion, swollen City budgets, and other urbanization reforms impacting the very fabric of 94549.I urge you to please take a few minutes to read this, check out ------- to everyone you know in Lafayette (and Moraga - for this will impact them too) and get involved now! These changes are dramatic and will alter the look and feel of Lafayette life forever. Read the attached letter from the Lafayette Homeowner's Council. Our town is about to be hijacked right out from under our noses. When I moved to Lafayette 15 years ago, I could drive from one end of Mt. Diablo Blvd to the other in 3 minutes. Now it takes 10. This is going to get much much worse.

Email: Sorry to send out another e-mail so soon after the last one, but we are in the midst of a flurry of activity that could irrevocably alter Lafayette's character. I have three items for you, all of which are yet to be acted upon by the Council and, therefore, in the perfect stage for public comment and participation. The first thing you should do after reading this is forward it to everyone you know in Lafayette. These are important issues for everyone and their families.

The big one is the Downtown Strategic Plan. Wow, I don't know where to start with this one, so I have attached a letter from the Lafayette Homeowners' Council. If you haven't familiarized yourself with the document, then you should do so. I have many qualms with it: it will urbanize Lafayette, homogeneizing the town, creating a much greater population density downtown (traffic will be outrageous), it will destroy Lafayette's nightlife by eventually eliminating the Roundup and Petar's (who's going to make up the property/sales tax revenue?), and it will create more capital outlays and maintenance needs to distract us from fixing our neighborhood roads.

The plan has met strong opposition from the Homeowners' Council and neighborhood associations, and the members of the Lafayette Taxpayers Association seem to be just as opposed; the Chamber of Commerce is so far exhibiting a mixed response, but property owners are concerned about the spectre of future eminent domain and property rights issues.

March 1 – M. Hunt – Email

As owners of the lot on which the Roundup Saloon and the antique store at 20 Lafayette Circle are located, it has come to our attention that the Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan proposes significant changes to part of our holdings. In particular, the plan proposes to turn the southern part of our lot into a park and walkway adjoining the creek.

Since we have only recently been made aware of this proposal there are a couple of points we would like to bring to the attention of the Creeks Committee as it considers the draft Strategic Plan.

First of all, we would like the Committee to understand that the land on which both building (the Roundup and the antique store) is a single lot, though it is currently divided by a fence. The fence was installed some years ago solely to limit the circulation of traffic from the Roundup parking lot and has not resulted in the division of the land into two parcels.

It appears to us that since the Draft Strategic Plan appears to limit the proposed park to the area south of the fence in the middle of our lot that the people developing the plan may have believed that the land was two separate parcels rather than one united lot.

Secondly, it is unclear to us if the Strategic Plan seems to proposes the demolition of the building at 20 Lafayette Circle, currently occupied by an antique store. The drawing on page 1-5 of the plan indicates a building on the location of the existing building, but other references in the plan indicate the removal and reconstruction of existing buildings at unspecified sites.

We consider it possible that the design committee was unfamiliar with the history of the building at 20 Lafayette Circle as no reference seems to made to it in the plan. It should be noted that the Hunt family has owned the entire lot in the original Hough track for something approaching 100 years and through three generations.

The wooden frame building located at 20 Lafayette Circle was originally built on the Mount Diablo Boulevard location currently occupied by the Roundup Saloon. In that location is was a hot dog and refreshments business run by my great aunt. When Roundup was constructed in 1933 with the repeal of prohibition, the earlier structure was moved south on the lot and placed under the oak tree. It seems quite likely that the building at 20 Lafayette Circle is the oldest surviving structure in what the Strategic Plan refers to as the Shield Block.

Thank you for allowing us to bring this information to the attention of the Creek Committee. As property holders directly affected by the proposals in the draft Strategic Plan we would like to request any additional information regarding the plan's impact on our property the Creek Committee can provide to us.

As owners of the lot on which the Roundup Saloon and the antique store at 20 Lafayette Circle are located, it has come to our attention that the Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan proposes significant changes to at least part of our holdings. Since we have only recently been made aware of this proposal there are a couple of points we would like to bring to the attention of the Advisory Committee as it considers the draft Strategic Plan.

We understand that the plan has been in development for many months. We are also sure that everyone understands that our economy has undergone significant shifts during the time the plan was being developed. The most radical changes, at least for California, have been in the value of our commercial and residential real estate. Only a few months ago some property was worth as much as double what it is today, as was the value of many investment accounts.

From our reading of the Draft Strategic Plan it appears to be an artifact of the recent gilded age of unlimited property development and constantly rising economic prospects that began to unravel last summer. As we move into much more challenging economic conditions we believe the Committee would be wise to consider how the prospect of an extended economic downturn might impact such an ambitious development plan.

In particular the plan does not seem to account for how any of the costs related to the acquisition of land to implement the Strategic Plan will be funded. When the prospects for private development seemed virtually unlimited, it might have been possible, though not entirely realistic, to assume that the funding would be primarily private. But under the currently economic conditions we suggest that it is very irresponsible to adopt a strategic plan of any sort that does not comprehensively account for all the costs related to it.

We would also suggest the adoption of such an ambitious plan at this point could tend to stifle any more limited attempts to increase the economic health of existing businesses by placing a straight-jacket of vision over practicality. This seems an inopportune time to be proposing the demolition of many of the most important current retail locations in the city so they can be shifted to "improved" locations on the same properties or simply replaced by new construction. Instead of destruction, the city might want to consider how to assist existing businesses in surviving the current downturn.

Since the current economic conditions are so unsettled and the potential of a significant downturn continues to exist, the current timeline for the adoption of the new Strategic Plan seems far too hurried. A delay of at least twelve to eighteen months to see if property values and economic activity will recover to a point where an informed decision regarding the ambitious goals of the proposed plan could be made seems only prudent.

March 2 – H. Zucker – Email

Sorry I wasn't able to make the meeting the other evening, but I read the article in the CCTimes with great interest.

It's exciting that the plans include downtown residential units, and I noticed that some are proposed for near Lafayette Circle. I'm still trying to figure out where those would go, but in the meantime, I would like to urge that they are not townhouses, but flats, whether condos or not and also provided with elevators. I also love the idea of residences above commercial buildings (would there have to be a caveat about highly pungent restaurants in those?)

Since Woodbury will be a luxury development, and the "affordable housing" is income regulated and subsidized , is anyone considering the people in-between? Are you calling those "market priced" or is there another term for mid-priced? Is that the intention for the area in Lafayette Circle? I notice that they are designated "townhouse" and would like to remind people that stairs are not desirable or appropriate to everyone, especially for people who would like to age in place.

March 2 – L. Hiden – Email

The Lafay General Plan 2002 states in its Growth Management Element, Policy LU-8.3 " Support mixed-use developments in the Downtown that do not conflict with the primarily retail focus of this area." "....primarily retail focus of this area."....I just wanted to call the group's attention to that, so that we don't lose our focus.

March 2 (received) – S. Graeger – Letter

Thinking of downtown Lafayette, it seems to me, we need parking spaces, parking spaces. Mt. Diablo Road, our main street, at times is so clogged up that roller skates would be better. And it is not only Mt. Diablo Road, it is the Safeway, Peet's Coffee, Madison Square where it is often difficult to park. Where are going to be Whole Foods' customers cars? What about Chow's, Ferraro's, Chico's, Pendleton's and Papillon Coffee House's square? Also, too many cars!! Here, at least a flower could be planted. Lafayette needs more space! But PLEASE, do not take away the little free space we have along Deerhill Rd., between the reservoir park and the Orchard Nursery. Maybe, a little building, if necessary, could be done around St. mary's Road. PLEASE LEAVE US SOME SPACE!

LAFAYETTE DOWNTOWN STRATEGY AND SPECIFIC PLAN

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #3

February 25, 2009

WORKSHOP NOTES

Attendees:	106 (excluding consultants, City Council, and staff)
Consultants:	WRT – Jim Stickley, Steve Hammond, Susan Poliwka; F&P – Ellen Poling; BAE – Ron Golem
City Council:	Mayor Tatzin, Vice-Mayor Brandt Andersson, Councilmembers Anderson and Anduri
Staff:	Steve Falk, Ann Merideth, Niroop Srivatsa, Greg Wolff, Lindy Coburn, Michael Cass, Sarah Allen and Leah Greenblat

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Welcome

Mayor Tatzin welcomed the participants on the behalf of the City.

Project Overview

Jim Stickley made a Powerpoint presentation about the project background and key elements of the Draft Strategy and Specific Plan. About half of the audience indicated they had seen the Plan.

Discussion

The participants spent an hour discussing the key elements at 13 tables. Each table had a facilitator from the consultants or staff.

Presentations

A spokesperson from each table presented the results of the discussions.

- Table 1
  - Districts – nothing significant, fine with the districts
  - Regulations
    - Height – reasonable, but only in the core
    - Density – there are concerns about the amount of people
  - Circulation
    - Needs more attention
    - Moraga Road north of Mount Diablo – the "Big Dig" – get rid of it
    - If you remove parking, add parking
    - Bikes are not compatible with cars in congested areas
  - Parks and Creeks – Enthusiastic about the idea, but how do you do it
  - East End – okay with the idea, but the medians would have to be broken up

- Table 2

  - Agree with everything Table 1 said
  - Control chain stores – we don't want to destroy the boutiquey character of our stores
  - Definition of "tweaks" – government "tweaks" us a lot
  - Very concerned about height – don't want to walk down canyon, we want to see the hills, we want to be semi-rural
  - Like the idea of setbacks and stepbacks
  - Want to see difference in heights
  - Want accessibility without cars – benches for seniors, play areas, open space
  - Okay to increase density if you give us more open space
  - We want an aesthetically pleasing parking structure
  - Mini-buses – Moraga is going to have a lot more units
  - We are in favor of arbor-effect in our medians

- Table 3

  - Maintain the small-town character
  - Concern about 65 units per acre
  - Concern about height and how height is measured
  - Is this a downtown for seniors?
  - Fear of sidewalk-to-sidewalk building
  - Back the buildings off the street
  - Move housing to the East End
  - Too tall, too many, too close
  - We have to choose between housing regulations vs. desirability
  - Parks and creeks are a positive part of the Plan
  - In the Shield Block, add bridges
  - Housing mix in the Shield Block is desirable
  - Crime issues with the creeks given our banks and creeks
  - Terracing of creeks could lead to crime, graffiti, homeless
  - Circulation and parking – there needs to more traffic mitigation
  - Bring back two-way traffic on First Street
  - About the process
    - Does environmental review allow developers to come in and build without further review
    - Has anything been thrown out of this Plan
    - Why are we saying developers won't build one-story buildings

- Table 4

  - Community character – districts are good, logical
  - Height – generally okay, but change the character of the downtown
  - No increased density south of Mount Diablo Blvd
  - Parks and creeks – in favor, strong support
  - Circulation and parking – generally okay, but concerns about a central parking facility and having to walk – how will that work for seniors
  - What are the new streets north of Mount Diablo Blvd
  - Streetscapes – opposed to the East End as the highest priority

- Table 5

  - Supportive of progress and change
  - Overall, the process has been flawed
  - Input has been ignored – it is a consultant-driven Plan
  - Character – change in Lafayette, a lot at once
  - Nothing feels semi-rural
  - Regulations – the General Plan is good already, what are the changes to the General Plan
  - Parks and creeks – disagreement at the table
    - Parks and retail don't mix
    - Conceptual idea is okay, but not realistic
  - Circulation and parking
    - How is traffic improved
    - More development means more traffic
  - Streetscapes – love the ideas, but how were priorities chosen
  - Don't kid yourself – big buildings will be built

- Table 6

  - Creek enhancement – make that the entryway to Golden Gate Way
  - How will the Plan be implemented
  - It is an exceptional vision
  - Low-cost/no-cost parking is vital to downtown
  - Enhance downtown, but it is not financially feasible
  - Build a community center for seniors, teens, events in the downtown
  - Don't mess with the Round Up
  - Walkable downtown is good
  - Retail at night could use office parking
  - Retail should stay like boutiques
  - Height not an issue, but views should be preserved
  - Transit-oriented development is viable around BART

- Table 7

  - This is a fundamental change to Lafayette
  - This will homogenize us
  - Can't make us into another city, like Carmel or Walnut Creek
  - Canyon of buildings will block views
  - Lack of character is shown by the lack of street names on the maps
  - We are being invaded by developers
  - We are not a Tiffany area
  - East End is not a priority
  - Can't get rid of car uses – need to buy gas downtown
  - Not mixed use
  - High density = high crime
  - Town Center is not Lafayette
  - Views will be destroyed
  - New downtown Berkeley
  - Parks and creeks – not uniquely Lafayette
  - Huge amount of money spent on spaces only used 10% of the time
  - Public Works needs to stay on drainage and sidewalk condition

- Parks are not a true amenity
- Circulation and parking – difficult between 11 and 1
- How will parking structures look
- There no pleasant pedestrian experience on Mount Diablo Blvd
- Trees and median help
- Where is the maintenance – downtown is not being maintained now
- Streetscapes – not a community goal

- Table 8

  - There is a traffic problem and a parking problem
  - What about a parking structure on the lot behind the Methodist Church
  - Like plazas, but not parks in the downtown
  - Golden Gate Way is a good redevelopment area with a park
  - How does eminent domain figure into this Plan
  - How did the BART platform become the standard
  - Did the consultants figure that out when they got off BART

- Table 9

  - We echo most of what has already been said
  - Plan is just the framework for what will happen
  - Heights are concern, but could be lessened with showing corner treatments and view corridors
  - Parks and creeks – good idea, but can they be accomplished
  - Circulation and parking – parking can be behind buildings like in the Shield Block
  - If you remove parking, add parking
  - Design of parking structures is a concern
  - Was development in Moraga considered
  - Like the street improvements
  - Look at pedestrian safety, maybe use sidewalk bulbs
  - Make sure congestion is not made worse

- Table 10

  - For character, the survey was our root
  - 87% were happy as is
  - Park-once not in the survey
  - Regulations – understood increased height, but need more setback for third story
  - We like our General Plan
  - Look at 9-6 and 9-7 in the Plan
  - Eden Housing is an example of the density bonus increasing the allowed density
  - Not happy with no setbacks, no required open space
  - Parks and creeks – like what is shown for the Shield Block
  - Parking – make mandatory employee parking
  - Streetscape – East End should be #1 priority, but allow left turns for businesses

- Table 11

  - Density and height – smart change is needed, but what will it do to services
  - Support height increase next to BART
  - Senior housing needed downtown

- Streetscapes – favor East End, but need median breaks
- The T – the parking structure will make traffic worse because of additional cars going in and out
- Structure should be on north side of Mount Diablo Blvd
- Parks – is Gazebo #2
- Trees in the median should be native, drought resistant to reduce costs
- Creeks –
  - Could increase City's liability
  - What about transients

- Table 12

  - Character –
    - Overriding concern – maintain existing character
    - What should be preserved in the downtown should be used as the starting point in deciding what to add
    - Districts are appropriate
  - Regulations – diverse views at the table
  - Parks and creeks –
    - Best feature of the Plan
    - Concerns about maintenance and liability
    - Why was the Plaza left untouched – it should be redeveloped as part of the Plan
  - Parking and circulation –
    - Favored secondary road running parallel to Mount Diablo Blvd
    - Look at extending Moraga Road to connect to Hwy 24
  - Streetscapes – concern by East End businesses about visibility and access, but need more information

- Table 13

  - Character – maintain the existing
  - Districts – what about medical buildings, they should be addressed
  - Regulations – need more transparency about what these regulations mean
  - Parking and circulation –
    - There should not be any parking on Moraga Road
    - Something needs to be done about the light at Moraga Road / Brook Street / School Street – connect Brook and School or eliminate the light
  - Streetscapes – good suggestions

Wrap-Up

Steve Hammond gave a summary of the major points made by the different tables.

Four participants left behind individual comments:

- Historical areas? Maintenance costs for parks and creeks. Like the proposed road between BART and Mount Diablo. East End (streetscapes) slows traffic with left turns, exiting businesses – maintenance cost long-term.

- WRT, again, did not listen. We want our small town. We want our hill views. Summary by WRT is ...(unreadable) of building height and loss of views. The summary was atrocious. It was distorted, inaccurate, dismissive of the input and totally wrong on building height. It again completely failed to mention small town and semi-rural advocates.

- Do not try to push this disguised overcrowded development on use by ameliorating it with greenery. Do not twist everything around. We do not wish this garbage. We want to preserve the life we have and not spoil it with such projects that benefit the developers at our cost.

- Keep small town feel. The Plan appears to support a new "urban" Lafayette. I disagree with this view. High density housing in Lafayette is out of character for this community and will just add to traffic and parking problems. Summary by WRT employee was completely off the mark. He was basically defending his/WRT plan.

ATTACHMENT 1

LAFAYETTE HOMEOWNERS COUNCIL

649 Los Palos Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549

Item 11M

February 24, 2009

Lafayette City Council
City of Lafayette
P.O. Box 1968
Lafayette, CA 94549

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council and Downtown Advisory Committee,

Re: Comments on Draft Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan (*DSP*)

The Board of the Lafayette Homeowners Council (LHC), thanking the many individuals and groups who have also participated in this effort, respectfully offers the following comments on the *Draft Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan (DSP)*, prepared by the City's consultant, Wallace, Roberts, and Todd, LLC (WRT).

While conceptually there are useful elements, such as the integration of green areas, parks, and a walkable creekside into our downtown, on the whole, it appears to us that in many areas, the consultant used its in-house, boilerplate plan, rather than one designed for and specific to Lafayette. We are not Ashland, Mercer Island, or San Luis Obispo, nor do we wish to be Carmel, Healdsburg, or Walnut Creek. We don't mind 'growth' per se, but we also wish to remain a safe, semi-rural community with good schools, good roads and local shops. Our biggest problems are the condition of certain of our roads, and the traffic congestion--- in particular, through-traffic from Moraga. The *Draft Plan* does not properly address traffic issues, nor does it focus on how we maintain our semi-rural identity. It eliminates many of our favorite shops and community icons. In fact, in this plan, a lot of what we enjoy in this town isn't there anymore.

The *Draft Plan* needs major revisions-- or, as many believe, perhaps the process should begin again. Or, perhaps not? (As you are aware from a planning standpoint, there is no critical need for *DSP*, as Lafayette has an excellent *Lafayette General Plan 2002* in place that includes the "downtown" area.)

Our initial comments are as follows:

- The portion regarding the development of creeks and parks downtown was well- done. However, there was no financial analysis of the operating and maintenance costs for new parks and creek walkways.
- The downtown as shown is too dense, the buildings too tall, the stepbacks, too short. The *Draft Plan* needs a variety of structures, staggered heights and more stringent set –back standards, as well as preservation of the unique character existing south of Mt. Diablo Boulevard.
- Inconsistencies abound in the *Draft Plan*, since the high densities proposed and the constraints of our limited roads infrastructure don't yield a pedestrian- friendly downtown.

- From a "green" perspective, large masses of buildings are environmentally damaging, hold in air pollution, and will result in a hotter downtown. Furthermore, massing tall buildings in neighborhoods like Brook Street will result in the destruction of many large trees. *The Plan* diminishes our primary asset—our natural location amid views of rolling hills and heritage oaks. Views of the hillsides seem to be missing, as the Draft Plan appears to be devised to produce just little pocket views from the downtown of our hills and magnificent ridgelines that we have worked hard to preserve.
- The Board strenuously objects to Moraga Road extending into and through the Safeway shopping center to connect with a new road between First St. and Happy Valley Road and to the Highway 24 freeway. This would cut Lafayette in half [like Orinda] and eliminate some of our favorite stores and gathering places and force pedestrians to islands of stores surrounded by cars. Nor does the Board support the continuation of Happy Valley Road to Bickerstaff due to impacts on businesses and neighborhoods.
- Some of the road diagrams are inaccurate --in particular, those with respect to Moraga Road.
- As has been mentioned before, the maps, pictures and legends, are often inconsistent and inaccurate –in particular, with respect to Moraga Road. A Technical Appendix should be included.
- There is neither a feasibility study nor an in-depth analysis finance section which, as we understand it, were part of the consultant's scope of work. The *Draft Plan* needs to add a discussion of how much retail Lafayette's downtown can actually accommodate, since the *Lafayette General Plan 2002* recommended keeping considerably more retail square footage. Please include a comparison table.
- Any proposed cultural/civic/city offices center plan should include the elements of such a district and the impacts of a parking structure on Moraga Road—which would exacerbate the traffic and turning problems we are now experiencing along this corridor.
- The downtown is already "under- parked." To reduce parking spaces further or to raise meter rates will only encourage people to shop in nearby towns.
- The concept of "park once and walk" is unrealistic and unworkable in a community that relies on cars to perform professional and family commitments under time constraints. Further, bus circulation through neighborhoods will not happen due to insufficient funding and ridership.
- Emergency services were merely identified. There is no discussion of impacts of development downtown on services such as fire, police, water and schools. Police services should be moved to a more visible location. The *Draft Plan* does not factor in increased costs for fire safety, as it relates to the proposed increased heights and denser development. These increased problems and costs would apply equally to police services.
- More attention should be paid to the development and parking in the East End of town.
- There needs to be a clarification of development "by right" and to clearly spell out developers' and the City's processing rights "by law" when an application is submitted for development in a city's Downtown Specific Plan. Please clarify which of the maps, drawings, diagrams, and photographs become "regulatory" in intent.
- Please include clarification of how CEQA and the EIR process will be implemented if the City decides to proceed with this *Draft Plan*.
- Does *The Plan* rely on the use of eminent domain?

In general, we live in Lafayette because we like the small town, semi-rural atmosphere. We like seeing the natural beauty of our surroundings and we consider them our heritage to pass on to future generations. We are not anti-growth, but if we wanted to live in a dense, crowded environment, we would live somewhere else.

Very truly yours,

Maeve Pessis
President

Cc: Citizens Advisory Committee, *Draft Lafayette Downtown Specific Plan & Strategy*
Lafayette Planning Commission
Lafayette Circulation Commission

ATTACHMENT 2

THE STUART COMPANY
1007 Oak Hill Road • Lafayette, California 94549-3812
Phone (925) 284-1115 • Fax (925) 284-1131

Cover Sheet

☒ **Hand Delivered**

☐ **U.S. Mail**

☐ **Other**

To: Attendees and Guests **Date:** February 24, 2009

Organization: Lafayette Chamber of Commerce **From:** Chuck Stuart

Address:

Phone #: **RE:** W.R.T. Specific Plan

☒ **Please Review** ☐ **Please Comment** ☒ **For Your Information**

- **Comments:**

Packets attached:

I. Existing Ace Hardware and Ace Hardware Annex

II. Plaza Way Shops

III. Plaza Pointe Building

IV. Lafayette Square

Thank you,

Chuck Stuart

Council Meeting with C.A.C and guests, February 21, 2009

Raised many Questions!

Over a dozen times the word "confusing" was used by C.A.C. members, guests and residents alike, regarding the W.R.T. Report.

That meeting and comments and the materials set the groundwork for our personal review of the in process "Draft", dated January 2009 of the Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan.

Important Suggestions

- We notice that the numerous individual Sheets are not dated; feel such would be helpful, as the review progresses.
- We *attempted* to cover the materials.
- Many examples of a need to better – –
  - Define
  - Label
  - Correlate
  - Support
  - Supplement
  - Provide authors' data sources.
  - Provide recommendation successes, and recent experiences.
- There are some examples of
  - Poor readability.
  - Inadequate explanation for basis of conclusions.

Other

- Often there is absence of consideration relative to:
  - The "Domino Effect"; and
  - "The Law of Physics": (for every action there is likely to be a reaction).

    How does – –

    Reduction in Parking Requirements, without a net increase in available parking, in general, not effect circulation and congestion in an area and its surrounds?

    How does – –

    An Increase in Traffic Volume, not effect net congestion in an area and its surrounds?

Specific Examples of Concerns

I. Existing Ace Hardware and Annex Location

Contradictions?

How does one rationalize the following two entries?

Page 9-14 Implementation

Page 5-13 East End District

Shows: Ace Hardware and Ace Annex

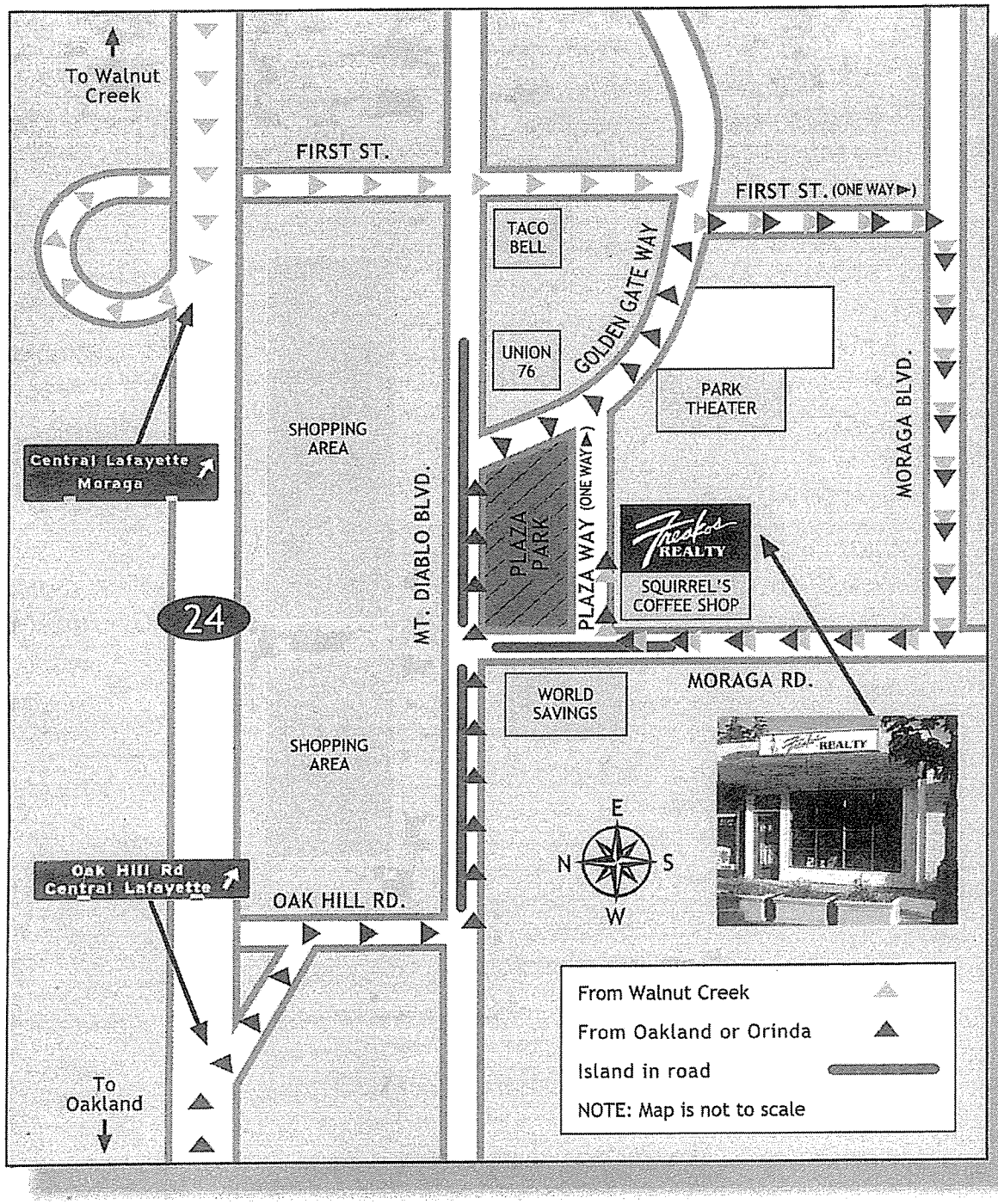
II. Years 1997-1998. Unfortunate example of Merchants and Property Owner Cooperation with City:

Plaza Way Curb Parking and Circulation

- Planning Committee Merchants, Property Owners, and City Staff (City Manager)
- Joint agreement to have a minimum of one row "curb parking".
- Circulation to be clockwise.
- Later, unilaterally City changed circulation direction to counter-clock wise.
- Measure "C" Funding.
- Merchants have struggled with serious access problem since.

See attachments

1. Merchant's pass-out map and directions.
2. Plaza Park, 5a) Summary of plans.
3. Merchant's Letter to City Manager.
4. Merchant's Letter to Chuck Stuart.
5. Merchant's Letter to Newspaper, by Tenant.



Fresko's REALTY

3541 Plaza Way • Lafayette, CA 94549
Tel 925.299.7700 • Fax 925.299.7707

STORE-FRONT PARKING

From Walnut Creek:

- Take Hwy 24 West; take the "Central Lafayette" exit.
- At the light, turn right and continue going toward First Street and proceed under the freeway.
- Cross Mt. Diablo Blvd., then cross Golden Gate Way.
- At Moraga Blvd. turn right.
- At Moraga Rd. turn right again.
- At Plaza Way turn right again.
- Store-front parking is immediately on the right side of Plaza Way (we provide you parking meter change).

From Oakland or Orinda:

- Take Hwy. 24 East through Caldecot Tunnel; proceed approx. 6.5 miles (past Orinda).
- Take the "Central Lafayette" exit (Oak Hill Road).
- At the bottom of the ramp, turn right on Oak Hill Road toward Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Turn left at Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Proceed past next stop light (at Moraga Road) and go a short distance and turn right on Golden Gate Way (by the Plaza).
- Pass the Park Theater, then turn right on First St.
- At Moraga Rd. turn right again.
- At Plaza Way turn right again.
- Store-front parking is immediately on the right side of Plaza Way (we provide you parking meter change).

Providing you an ideal home loan OMEGA Mortgage Co.

b) Consolidate pedestrian crossings at south side of School Street / Moraga Road intersection; includes removal of crosswalks at Brook Street/Moraga Road intersection, install crosswalks at School Street / Moraga Road intersection;

c) Install a temporary pedestrian barrier on Moraga Road in front of Lafayette School multi-purpose room or in center line of Moraga Road at Brook Street;

d) Work with Masons to allow safe walking passage behind Masonic Hall; refer options for reconfiguring, rebuilding, or relocating Masonic Hall to provide wider sidewalk at Moraga Road / Brook Street intersection to the Circulation Commission for review;

e) Indicate to CCTA that the City's long term goal is to realign the Brook Street / School Street intersection; refer options for doing so to the Circulation Commission, Planning Commission, and General Plan Advisory Committee;

f) Refer the creation of new student drop-off zones to the Circulation Commission.

5) **Plaza Park**

a) Planned closure of Plaza Way and expansion of Plaza Park south- and east-ward pending the development of a design that accommodates the concerns of local merchants; improvements may include new landscaping, plaza, light fixtures, etc., but final design to be determined after a series of community design workshops that will incorporate needs of local businesses, historical society, City, and other interested parties; on-street parking would be retained on the eastern side of the park; use preliminary studies that indicate a potential net gain of six parking spaces – from 14 to 20 – as a starting point for discussion; consider existing conditions as one of the options for Plaza Way and Plaza Park. INCORRECT

b) Work with nearby property owners to acquire additional off-street parking;

c) Move the Mt. Diablo Boulevard / Moraga Road intersection signal control boxes to north side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard; exact location to be determined after consultation with landscape architect.

Implementation of these recommendations include:

- Prioritize projects to be implemented;
- Perform required environmental analyses;
- Preparation of project budget estimates;
- Initiation of process for appropriating $4 million "strategic plan" funding;
- Immediate selection and retention of design consultants;
- Inclusion of design costs in proposed 1998/99 FY municipal budget; and
- Develop a phased implementation plan to construct projects in construction years 1999 and 2000.

Handlebar Toys

(510) 284-4631

3535 Plaza Way
LaFayette, CA 94549

ındlebar Toys
35 Plaza Way
ıyette, CA 94549
925/284-4631

January 17, 2001

City of Lafayette
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Lafayette, CA 94549

ATTN: Steven Falk
Manager

Dear Steve:

Handlebar Toys has come through the year 2000, but not easily. Continuous construction has taken its toll; loyal customers have had difficulty finding parking spaces and also in simply finding access to our location. We now have competition in town, which under ordinary circumstances would not worry us in the least but we have some concerns.

It seemed like one more blow when the movie theater owners decided to put on matinees, five each day beginning at 1 pm taking up all the available parking spaces for the entire afternoon and evening, having a serious impact on our business. We want you to put some time restrictions immediately on the parking spaces and be sure to have it clearly posted.

We are now faced with the replacement of our sidewalk, beginning this Thursday, 1/18. The guarantee from the construction company is that some kind of plank access to our store will be installed during this month long project. According to my observation the access will be used by the few and the majority will wait until the project is completed.

I am sure you have a picture of our efforts to stay in business in Lafayette, and I need say no more.

Yours truly,

Freda Challis

Freda Challis

cc: Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
The Stuart Company
The Contra Costa Sun

Dear Poys:

For your info.
The fact a letter has already been sent the City, is a surprize to me. Freda gave me a telephone courtesy call about a week ago, to let us know she wanted to write a letter. I suggested she might wish to discuss the matter with some neighbors first. I would then be happy to review any thoughts and make suggestions. That didn't happen. But her letter is ok (except "copy to Sun"); and at least it is her way of communicating.

Chuck
Jan. 19, 2001

F & J Inc.
Handlebar Toys
3535 Plaza Way
Lafayette, CA 94549
925/284-4631

February 21, 2006

The Stuart Company
1007 Oak Hill Road
Lafayette, CA 94549

Attn: Chuck Stuart

Dear Chuck,

Of course the most substantial problem is #1, the lack of convenient parking. Parking, even in our current situation, is bad at best. The parking spaces on Plaza Way are inaccessible to all but the bravest and most experienced Lafayette drivers. Many a customer we have lost due *directly* to the lack of convenient parking. In the proposed building, the parking problem would be even greater.

An elderly gentleman stationed by the bar said, "You with Shell?"

"No. It's just the two of ___," said Dan.

The old man motioned to the female bartender, who pointed to a booth next to the wall. She trotted over and handed us menus. She said a waitress would be helping us shortly.

"He must be the guy who runs this place," said Dan.

"Must be. He keeps sending those Shell people to the back room," I said.

"You bet. Everything is going to cost more," agreed Dan.

The old man sh___ his head.

"And business is bad. Today not too bad. Got two big parties. Eighty people in that back room. But we need more people every day for lunch," he said.

"How long has business been bad?" I said.

"Been here 10 years. First two years, good. Downhill all the time after that," he said.

"The new railroad station, when will it open?" said Dan

Plse forward for info

1-31-01

Our Readers Say

Toy store owner cites concerns

This is a copy of a letter sent to Lafayette city manager Steve Falk:

Handlebar Toys has come through the year 2000 but not easily. Continuous construction has taken its toll; loyal customers have had difficulty finding parking spaces and simply finding access to our location. We now have competition in town, which under ordinary circumstances would not worry us in the least.

It was another blow when the movie theater owners decided to put on matinees, five each day beginning at 1 p.m., taking up all the available parking spaces for the entire afternoon and evening. We want you to put some time restrictions on the parking spaces and be sure to have it clearly posted.

We are now faced with the replacement of our sidewalk. The guarantee from the construction company is that some kind of plank access to our store will be installed during this month-long project. In my observation, the access will only be used by a few and the majority will wait until the project is completed.

I am sure you have a picture of our efforts to stay in business in Lafayette, and I need say no more.

Freda Challis,
Handlebar Toys, Lafayette

Student supports Acalanes tax

I am surprised that Measure B, the Acalanes Union High School District parcel tax, didn't pass last year and is "touch and go" this time around. I don't see any reason to vote against it.

It is very important that the Acalanes voters vote yes on the parcel tax. It will have a significant effect on people (like me) going into high school for the next six years.

Another thing that strikes me as surprising is that even with the parcel tax, we will be more than $1,000 under the national average of $7,000 per student. With the parcel tax, we stand at $5,850 and without the parcel tax, we are at $5,375. Even after the parcel tax, the Tamalpias and Sequoia high school districts are ahead of the Acalanes district.

If this parcel tax doesn't win 66.6 percent of the votes, then we are out of luck. My fellow students and I might be forced to look into going to a private school. Test scores will probably go down, causing the Acalanes district schools to lose their top 40 position in the state of California. Extracurricular activities will be negatively impacted. Orinda could lose its reputation for great schools.

To put it in basic words, the Acalanes High School District is in big trouble if this doesn't pass. My friends and I are doing everything we can to help and encourage anyone else who wants to help to do so.

Kent Holland, Orinda Intermediate sixth-grader

HOW TO REACH US

The Sun welcomes letters to the editor regarding coverage of community issues. Letters reflect only the opinion of the writer.

Letters must include your first and last names, address and daytime phone number. All letters are subject to verification. All letters may not be published.

Deadline is noon Friday. Send letters to:

Our Readers Say
Contra Costa Sun
P.O. Box 599
Lafayette, CA 94549
Fax: (925) 284-1039
E-mail: ccsun@cctimes.com

Senior exemption was ill-advised

The Acalanes Union High School District "Vote Yes on Measure B" decision-makers have come up with an innovative idea trying to gain the support of the age 65+ voters. Their "carrot-and-stick" ploy allows for an optional exemption from any voter of this large age group, voiding their obligation to be taxed for the proposed increased parcel tax rate from $23 to $85 a year for 6 years.

As a member of the Alliance of Contra Costa Taxpayers (ACCT), I strongly object to this unfair and discriminatory option. An approved tax must be paid by all eligible and voting residents — with no exceptions! The proposed burden should not fall on the under 65 voters/property owners, who already have a full plate of taxes and financial obligations. ACCT tried to convince the Acalanes School Board Measure B ballot advocates that this optional exemption and parcel tax was wrong, but we were turned down flat.

Last year, the district used furtive means to obtain voter approval of a special election parcel tax just weeks after the regular primary election. This evasive scheme cost taxpayers $125,000 in unconsolidated election costs. Now, dodging the November general election will cost an additional $63,000.

Calculate your existing tax burden and then ask yourself: Are current taxes A) too low; B) high enough now; or C) too high already? ACCT finds the answer obvious.

For all the facts and figures, please visit our Web site at www.alliancetaxpayers.net and vote no on Measure B on March 6.

Peter Muller, Orinda

III. Plaza Point Building (Delayed after first Design Review Hearing. Issue is the late-term mandating of a vehicle Access for others from numerous properties to the west without consideration. Still unresolved)

Determine under the W.R.T. Specific Plan, as proposed, whether it resolves the above threat of the denigration of our property, should we build a corner building on Parcels APN 243-110-006 & 007, as shown, and provide two levels of parking above with some parking available to others through reimbursement?

See W.R.T., 9-15

IV. Lafayette Square, (Boswells and Caffino) What is the import to the C-1 District, locally-owned small business (W.R.T., 5-23), founded in our fair City many years ago, under the proposed Downtown Civic and Cultural District?

We may need to handle this and come to an understanding within near-term meetings.